

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION

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A People of Vision

A Confederation of the Salish,
Upper Pend d'Oreilles
and Kootenai Tribes

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House and Human Services

Dear Honorable Chairman David Howard and Committee members:

**Re: Interim Committee to Study Childhood Hunger
House Joint Resolution No. 8**

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) support the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 8 as it looks at the important issues of childhood hunger in Montana.

The CSKT Tribes are very concerned as we know first hand the devastating impacts on children and community when there is a lack of food available.

For the first time since the establishment of Food Banks in Montana, the Food Bank is directly providing food to the CSKT Head Start Program families. This is appreciated.

Per Jeanne Christopher, the Early Childhood Services (ECS) Director, "the CSKT Headstart Program has had an increase in parent and family involvement at the beginning & end of the month, due to lack of food in the household. The involvement includes all family members".

As a result of lack of food in participating homes, the food costs for the Head Start program have steadily increased as the number of family members attending the program at meal time has increased. Teachers are noting that kids are coming to the CSKT Head Start Program hungry. In past years, children might have been provided a breakfast prior to coming to Head Start, that is not the case now. Head Start program food leftovers are distributed daily to parents and children. Frequently there is not enough food to distribute to all who truly need it.

Jeanne Christopher also noted that "the CSKT Head Start Program has seen an increase in vandalism at local schools. We believe this increase in vandalism is directly related to "hunger issues" as stored food is taken from local centers".

This again is another impact of hunger in a rural community – increased vandalism, increased costs as a result of hunger and lack of food.

We have an obligation to ensure that our children have enough nourishment to get a proper education. Today's children are the leaders of tomorrow. All children in Montana deserve proper nutrition and good health. The CSKT Tribal Council worries about the needs of children. It is discussed nearly every Tribal Council meeting.

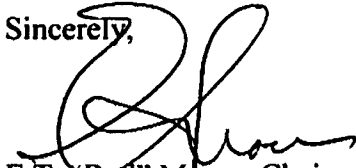
The CSKT appreciate the service of the Montana Food bank system and in past years have made donations to the cost of food and to the utility costs of each food bank as the Tribes recognize the important role of the food banks.

The CSKT continue to support the free and reduced lunch program, as sometimes this meal is the only meal that some children receive during the week.

The Tribes request to be included in any study. It is important that the study make up includes a Tribal representative who works with and on early childhood issues.

In closing, the CSKT support this step (and study) as a way to educate all of Montana on the needs of children and the families who are struggling to meet basic nutritional requirements.

Sincerely,



E.T. "Bud" Moran, Chairman
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Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

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